



Meadowbrook Playfield & Children's Play Area Improvement & Renovation Project Public Meeting #1 Summary Notes

The first public meeting for the Meadowbrook Playfield and Children's Play Area was held on September 25, 2002, from 7:00 to 9:00 PM in the Nathan Hale High School's library. The meeting was well attended by approximately 30 citizens.

Susanne Friedman, Parks Project Planner welcomed the group for attending the meeting and outlined that this was the first of a series of public meetings that Parks would be having to get community input on the Meadowbrook playfield and play area project designs. Kim Baldwin and Randy Robinson, Parks project landscape architects for the Play Area and the Playfield projects, were introduced.

Objectives for the evening were:

1. To give the community a working knowledge of the projects,
2. To let the community know what the project timelines are and opportunities for public input,
3. And for Parks staff to leave the meeting knowing what the community's priorities are for the different design elements.

The Project Goal for Coordination is to:

- Minimize impacts to users,
- To maximize funding potential
- And to develop a park complex that enhances and benefits all users of the complex.

Project Budget & Background

The Parks Department currently has 3 projects underway within the Meadowbrook Complex:

- The North Teen Life Center,
- The Play Area and
- The Playfields

The North Teen Life Center is a ProParks project converting the old community center, often referred to as the "annex", into a teen facility. This project is on its own separate process and timeline and coordination will occur only on exterior site planning for ADA access with the Play Area and Playfield projects.

The Play Area is a Capital Improvements Project (CIP) and is funded through Parks Major Maintenance fund and private donations. \$356,000 is from Major Maintenance funds. The Community Group, The Friends of Annie's Play Area, are raising private donations in memory of Annie Yasuda, and will apply for a Neighborhood Matching Fund. Their goal is to raise \$75,000 and are well on their way with having thus far raised \$40,000. The Meadowbrook Advisory Council has been very supportive of the Play Area, the North Teen Life Center and the

field renovations and has donated funds to several of these projects and we would like to thank the Advisory Committee for their on-going support along with the Friends of Annie's Playground group for their enthusiasm and coordination.

Project coordination with the play area project is for the footprint of the play space itself, and defining any issues that may affect the ballfield drainage and irrigation repairs. There will be a separate public process & timeline for design development for the play area, starting in 2003. The project scope for the play area is that it will be fully developed commensurate with other Community Center scale play areas and offer opportunities for a variety of age groups.

The CIP Statement for the Play Area reads as follows: this project renovates the outdated Play Area with new play equipment, safety surfacing, concrete curb, drainage, and accessible pathway to the comfort station and parking. These improvements provide a play area that meets current guidelines for safety clearances and accessibility.

Playfields

The Playfield project comes from the Parks Comprehensive Plan and the Joint Athletic Facilities Development Program (JAFDP). Funding for the Playfield renovations and improvements comes from the ProParks Levy, \$742,000. This amount needs to cover, overhead costs, public meetings and preparation, design development, all the design drawings, and construction. Generally, we estimate 60% for what actually gets built. Given that amount, we can not meet all the elements on the design list. We will be looking for additional funding sources, and encourage community members to do the same.

The project scope for the Playfield is to: Improve softball and baseball fields. Consider improvements to drainage, irrigation, lighting, etc. (Pro Parks Levy language) The language for the proposed JAFDP improvements at Meadowbrook Playfield include: turf renovation, backstop/wing fences, resurfacing tennis courts, play area, maintenance equipment and storage facility, fencing, (not field lighting) etc.

Ms. Friedman then went back to clarify the issue of lighting, citing the Mayor's recent directive mentioning no fieldlighting for Meadowbrook Playfield specifically. She then gave a rough description of the two types of lighting standards that might be considered: the 3'- 4' bollard or the 12'-14' pedestrian scaled fixture.

Parks Sportsfield Review Committee (SRC) had also recommended that the ball fields are to remain natural turf and will be scheduled during the season only for baseball and softball. Drop-in or unscheduled soccer, football, or ultimate frisbee may also occur.

Schedule

Planning	Design	Construction	Completion
2002	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004

Community Involvement

Ms. Friedman went over the Input and Decision-Making Matrix, pointing out which points were internal Parks review and which were public meetings. She also outlined that the final design program would be decided upon at the Parks Division Director level after considering recommendations from staff and community input at public meetings.

Site Analysis

Kim Baldwin, Parks Project Landscape Architect then went over the site analysis and design opportunities and challenges; pointing out key factors such as the existing Creeklet with natural habitat to the south along with the drainage problems and standing water in the outfield during the spring. Ms. Baldwin also addressed issues with the Play Area footprint and perimeter pathway and lighting needs.

Drainage

- The ball fields suffer from poor drainage in the spring and are often not usable due to standing water.
- Irrigation systems don't provide full coverage and need to be replaced.

Pathway Connections & ADA Accessibility

- The asphalt pathway is in poor condition due to root heave from adjacent trees making travel difficult for stroller and people with disabilities.
- The pathway is unmarked and unlit.
- It is possible for the pathway to connect all the major use areas within the park.

Ball Field Design Elements

- Parks funded backstop and fencing improvements on field #1 in 2001.
- The backstop and fencing for fields #2 and #3 are in need of repair or replacement.
- All three fields would benefit from improvements to the fencing, bleachers, scorer's tables, and/or dugouts.

Play Area Footprint

- The play area doesn't meet current accessibility guidelines
- The play area will be re-designed to provide play opportunities for children of various age groups.

Creek & Stream Sensitivity

- The site drains towards Thornton Creek. The runoff needs to be controlled before entering the creek to minimize impacts.
- Community members created Meadowbrook Creeklet and planted the corridor with native vegetation

Project Coordination

- This project will provide a coordinated planning effort for drainage and irrigation improvements and pathway connections to all Parks facilities
- This project will provide a coordinated effort to minimize construction impacts to the public from ball field and play area improvements

Property Agreement

- A portion of the site is owned by the School District and maintained by Parks & Recreation. An agreement is being finalized to transfer the property between the two agencies.

Key Elements

Randy Robinson, Parks Project Landscape Architect, outlined the Key Elements and afterwards opened the meeting up for public discussion and comments.

Project Elements – Playfield Renovations

- Demolition, Grading & Drainage – Remove turf, re-grade with an added sub-base of gravel and sand, and a new topsoil base to support turf growth while allowing absorption of rain to a new field drain system.
- Irrigation - Replace the existing system with a new automatic irrigation system including new pipes, valves, heads, controllers and flow meters connected to a new controller unit.
- Re-Seed - Install new sand soil-base, seed and establish new turf for the outfield areas.
- Playfield Access - Access from the Meadowbrook Community Center Complex to the play fields, play area, North Teen Life Center and Nathan Hale High School would provide a safe and accessible main route of travel linking the key buildings of the School District and Parks.
- Repaving - Install a new compacted rock base, root barrier and path of Portland Concrete Cement between the Nathan Hale parking lot and the Community Center parking lot.
- Pathway Lighting - As funds allow, install electrical power and pathway lights along this mail route of travel.
- Turf Management - Parks will define a turf management program for the field, in keeping with Parks standard practices.
- Fencing - Replace old with new, as existing funds allow.
- Site and Ballfield Amenities - Replace existing backstops or backstop fabric, improve or replace bleacher seats, scorer's tables, covered dugouts, expanded field storage and play line marking tape as existing funds allows.

Project Elements – Play Area Renovations

- Play Equipment – Provide play opportunities for children of various age groups.
- Containment Edge – Provide concrete curb or other edge to contain safety surfacing.
- Safety Surfacing – Provide new ADA safety surfacing to meet current Parks standards.
- Accessible Path – Provide ADA compliant path to increase connections between destinations and to integrate the play area with the other Parks facilities
- Infrastructure and Utilities – Renovate drainage, irrigation and potable water systems as required to accommodate play area renovations.
- Other Amenities – Provide benches, picnic tables, and drinking fountain to the extent possible with existing funding.

Questions and Comments

- I appreciate the big picture approach to the design and community involvement, and would ask that you take the same approach with the environmental areas – the natural creek corridor needs to be maintained and enhanced, and would encourage Parks to use more native vegetation.
- The Play Area siting is not optimal in its current location. The current configuration with the Play Area and the ballfields are not compatible. Are there ways to re-orient these uses? Neither group can play to their full potential.
- Can Parks use synthetic turf on #1?
- Where did the term “lighting” come from?
- The use of trees between the Play Area and ballfield #1 would be a nice effect, good screening.
- Will the trees along the creek be kept?
- Where will the drainage go for the new system?
- Will the comfort station be redone?
- The storage shed is rank; stinks of urine and has drainage problems. The drinking fountain doesn't work well and the storage room gets damp then smells terrible.
- Is there a commitment to keeping the 90' baseball field?
- Is there data on synthetic fields?
- Can we have a synthetic field on ballfield #1 and wing fences? Sand replacing the dirt would really help the drainage problems on the in-fields.
- Natural turf provides a nice balance with so many other fields in the area being artificial turf.
- What are the different synthetic turf types and do you know the cost benefits to those systems?
- If we do a good job with this process there will be an increase in the numbers of people using the complex. Lighting needs to be able to withstand defacing and be close enough together to still have light shed if a bulb is out. It's currently very dark and the vegetation needs to be trimmed.
- The three fields are currently used to the max. If they aren't drained well, it's a huge impact. Currently the size of the fields is terrific. Please don't alter the field sizes – we schedule ages 5-16.
- Drainage on ballfields 2 & 3, then fencing
- In favor of the trees around the play area, but make sure to maintain the line of sight with the children.
- Like the burms for seating
- Turf management – reduce the use of pesticides, water and fertilizer used. If artificial turf is installed it would make sense to have a joint management agreement between the school district and Parks.
- Does Parks have a soil specialist?
- Consider a variety of uses for the fields other than baseball, such as frisbee, open recreation and picnickers
- The upper meadow has a great vista would be a lovely place for some benches.
- Please limit vehicular access with logs or something. Cars have driven over the fields in the past, doing great damage.
- If the goal is to increase the age group variety, there really isn't sufficient space at the Play Area to accommodate everyone. How would the burm be used?
- Is it possible to put the older kids near ballfield #1?
- The storage room pallets create the stench from sitting in standing water. We need more storage room.

- Soil amendments should focus on making the infields playable during a rain shower.
- The comfort station smells and is an issue for everyone.
- Tree placement at backstop #1 is an added benefit for sun glare, could they be put in between the tennis courts and field #3?
- Need a better quality comfort station; more like the one at Jane Adams
- The play area is alive with activity all year round, the grass areas are used for practice space, if the only issue is money, can the play area be relocated?
- Trees are a wonderful idea as a noise barrier and are aesthetically pleasing. This is a Park project, not a baseball project. Don't' through out the play area, don't lose focus by being blinded by baseball. Remember the neighbors and a neighborhood park.
- The ball fields are used intensively all spring; the play area is used intensively all year long.
- Electrical outlets, covered dugouts for ballfields # 2 & 3 and netting for ballfield #1
- The play area gets used during the day by the high school students as a hang out spot, and by the preschool and daycare kids. The size (footprint) is not realistic given the use groups. There is a need for a discrete teen space. Trees take away space and visibility.
- Use high school students as an advisory group for development of the teen space.
- Collaborative parking and lighting strategy between the Nathan Hale high school and Parks. Light the bridge pathway connecting the two.
- Dirt and natural turf, not artificial turf
- An artificial surface is more usable
- Birds don't land on artificial turf, kids don't run around and throw airplanes on artificial turf
- No artificial lighting, shading or shadows on the creek
- The tennis courts are in need of sever repair – resurfacing, lighting, fencing.... Have been asking for several years now for these repairs.
- Please put in a raised scorer's box above the comfort station, similar to the one at Lower Woodlawn.
- Improve overall park maintenance and cleaning – garbage can clean up
- Isn't maintenance covered in the ProParks Levy?
- Install a working water fountain in the play area
- SRC gave a non-recommendation for the instillation of synthetic turf at Meadowbrook based upon multi use of the fields for a variety of age groups – from t-ball to varsity.

Comments submitted in writing by various citizens

- I would love to see some amenities designed to entice the high school student to use an area other than the children's play area. I have a child that attend the nearby Pre-school and every day before the kids go to the play area, the teacher puts on rubber gloves and picks up trash from the playground. It would be ideal if we could find a way to separate these two age groups.
- Although I understand that there are little leaguers that use the field, please remember this it the only neighborhood park for this area.
- I would like to know for sure that ballfield lighting is no longer being considered for this site. Could you e-mail or call me to confirm this?
- Keep the poplar trees along the creek. They will be critical to help shielding Nathan Hale's football field lights from the south.
- Develop a maintenance plan that doesn't put a lot of fertilizer into the drainage, then into the creek.
- Please keep dirt and grass in the ballfields. No artificial turf – we have enough in our neighborhood.
- Please keep the garbage can at NE 105th & 32nd NE.

Please consider including the following items in the Meadowbrook complex:

1. Synthetic surface warning paths in the outfields of 1, 2,& 3;
2. A scorer's booth with windows that slide open above the comfort station including electrical outlets at 2 & 3 and an equivalent structure at 1. The structure at #1 might serve as a means to help block foul balls;
3. Synthetic surface foul ball lines on all fields;
4. A field maintenance storage facility accessible to community groups;
5. Drainage, Drainage, Drainage, and more Drainage;
6. Some sort of concession stand room adjoining the comfort station and fields 2 & 3 or attached to the scorer's booth at field #1. This way user groups can sell concessions to raise money for their organizations and for continued volunteer efforts to maintain the fields; and
7. Opportunities for advertising on the scoreboards on each field. The money raised would be dedicated to field maintenance and garbage pick up.

Next Steps & Summary

Staff will explore a variety of options for the Play Area location and size and will look at the use of dirt mounds (burms), fencing, re-routing the walkway and the use of trees for foul ball screening, while being cognizant of other safety issues. There will also be specific attention given to ways in which we can provide a separate teen "hang-out" area and optimize play space that caters to a variety of age groups.

Drainage and irrigation is a significant problem with the ballfields, along with the need for improved playing surfaces in both the outfields and infields. The question of artificial turf received lots of attention and mixed reception from the group in attendance. Parks staff will cost out different design elements and provide realistic option packages to the community at the next meeting.

Parks maintenance staff will continue to abide by Parks policy of no pesticide or herbicide use on its fields, for this project, staff will develop maintenance recommendations for turf up-keep. The current conditions at the maintenance shed will be looked into.

Our next meeting will be held on **November 6th, 2002**, at the **Nathan Hale High School Library, from 7:00-9:00p.m.** At that time, staff will present concept designs and preliminary cost estimates along with more detailed project element information.

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